

THE TURKS OF CENTRAL ASIA: IN HISTORY AND AT THE PRESENT DAY¹

AN ETHNOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO THE PAN-TURANIAN PROBLEM

The Pan-Turanian Movement.

- 186 THE Pan-Turkic or Pan-Turanian movement, supported by the most aggressive portion of Turkish and German public opinion, is a diplomatic activity, the object of which is to subjugate to the Osmanly Turks directly, and to the Germans indirectly, all those countries in which various Turkic languages are spoken. Although its purpose is probably strategical and economic—the acquisition of the cotton of Turkestan, the gold of the Altai, and Central Asian riches in general²—this is hidden beneath the cloak of fostering the supposititious desire of various peoples between Thrace and Mongolia
- 121 for racial and national unity. Only a close study of the peoples whose tongues belong to the Turkic linguistic family can throw light on the moral side of this activity, and show whether the Pan-Turanian programme involves merely a desire for aggrandizement or whether it covers any other relationship, more

¹ The present work is an enlargement of a lecture delivered in the School of Oriental Studies in London on October 24, 1917.

² See Appendix A.

10 THE TURKS OF CENTRAL ASIA

- 121 essential than the linguistic one, uniting Central Asia with Constantinople.¹

103 A brief review of the Pan-Turanian programme will be necessary before approaching the main object of this essay, i.e. the study of the Eastern or Central Asiatic Turks. The term Central Asia, in accordance with Humboldt's definition, embraces the area lying between the Himalayas and the Altai Mountains, the Caspian Sea and Khingan Range. As far as the Western or Osmanly Turks are concerned, they are dealt with in several recent publications, namely, Sir William Ramsay's *The Intermixture of Races in Asia Minor* (Oxford University Press, 1916), Professor H. A. Gibbon's *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford University Press, 1916), Lord Eversley's *The Turkish Empire: its Growth and Decay* (Fisher Unwin, 1917), and *Le Problème Turc*, by Count Léon Ostroróg.² Though not dealing primarily with the racial question, these books give a vivid picture of the variety of races living under Osmanly (Ottoman) government, and of the artificiality of the ties that unite them. Sir William Ramsay further tells us how the Osmanly government has tried to develop feelings of unity and patriotism among its subjects on the ground of the common participation in the Islamic religion. But Pan-Islamism—Islam not being exclusively the property of the Turks—would in itself hardly serve to strengthen the position of the Turkic elements of the empire against Arabian and
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 of the Asiatic nations.

¹ Since these pages were written the British advance in Asiatic Turkey, together with the situation produced by the Russian Revolution, has led the German-Osmanly diplomatists to revise some 'details' of their programme. See Appendix B.

² An English version of this work, entitled *The Turkish Enigma*, in Winifred Stephens's translation, has just been announced by Messrs. Chatto & Windus.

-36-

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T.P.
121

corporate structures of these societies are exclusively patrilineal; and this patrilineal composition, the set of agnatic relationships, has cast the entire kinship system into a distinctive pattern. The thesis of the following pages will be that the kinship systems of the various societies of the Asiatic steppes, the Buryats, the Ordes, the Kalmyks, the Monguor, and the Kazakh-Kirgis, are a series of variations on that pattern, which is an abstraction, nowhere actualised in detail. To trace the working of the patrilineal principle throughout the entire culture, in religion, the economic system, the politico-military organization, is far too broad an undertaking for the present study. However, evidence from these various spheres will be drawn upon to support and deepen the analysis of the kinship system. And thus some insight may be gained into the manner whereby the agnatic relationship constitutes the social nexus, and thereby imposes its characteristic features on every aspect of culture and society on the steppes. The patrilineal, agnatic kinship system of these peoples gives that society its form, and as form, imposes itself on the cultural content, influencing thought, ideology, values, Weltanschauung.